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## Factors Influencing Pro-Environmental Behavior in Craft Businesses

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## Factors Influencing Pro-Environmental Behavior in Craft Businesses

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Since the arts and crafts movement in the early twentieth century, discourse on craft revolves around the conflict over industrialization. The current craft movement builds on these same responses to the industrialized world while addressing environmental issues and sustainability. However, craft literature does not address the pro-environmental business practices of craft artisans or motivational drivers of such behaviors. Therefore, this study attempts to expand the understanding of value and belief drivers of pro-environmental behaviors by identifying the pro-environmental behaviors of craft artisan business owners and by determining the factors that influence those behaviors. The value-belief-norm (VBN) theory of environmentalism (Stern, Dietz, Abel, Guagnano & Kalof, 1999) was used to outline the causal influences of pro-environmental behaviors in craft businesses and structural equation modeling was conducted to examine the relationships proposed in the theory.

As no directory of handmade craft business exists, Etsy.com was selected for this study as a means to reach independent sellers of handmade crafts in the U.S. Out of 3110 seller names compiled from the site, a random sample of 1036 or 1/3 of the total list was generated using Excel. An e-mail invitation to the online survey was sent to the sample through message links during August and September of 2015. Of the original 275 respondents the number of usable surveys was 212, for a final response rate of 20.46%. Respondents were predominantly female (87.3%), Caucasian (90%), and between the ages of 30 and 49 (48.8%). Respondents were well educated, with 35.4% holding a bachelor's degree and 27.4 % having completed some graduate work or holding a graduate degree. Respondents made a variety of different craft products with the most frequent product being home décor (48.1%), followed by clothing (41%), accessories (34.4%), and jewelry (24.5%).

The findings of this research identified the pro-environmental business practices of craft artisan business owners. Factor analysis of the behavior items generated two factors: 1) product and operations behaviors and 2) business planning behaviors. The product and operations behavior factor consisted of items related to the use of environmentally friendly raw materials for products and packaging, the reduction and recycling of production and business waste and the use of sustainable energy. The business planning behavior factor comprised planning behaviors such as setting specific environmental goals, conducting environmental audits, investing in research and development and having a mission statement about the business' commitment to the environment. US craft artisans were found to focus their pro-environmental efforts on items that fall within the product and operations behaviors such as recycling production waste ( $M = 4.15$ ) and reducing waste ( $M = 3.81$ ), sourcing environmentally friendly materials such as recycled materials ( $M = 4.09$ ), and using local materials ( $M = 3.98$ ). Craft artisans were not highly engaged in business planning behaviors like conducting environmental audits ( $M = 2.13$ ), setting

environmental goals ( $M = 2.43$ ) and having a mission statement about their commitment to the environment ( $M = 2.48$ ). While the importance of a strategic approach to business environmentalism is emphasized by the literature, few craft artisan business owners appear to have a strategic plan when it comes to pro-environmental behaviors. Most perform pro-environmental product focused behaviors and appear to have an ad hoc response to the environmental problems facing the world today. This is an indicator of a shallow interpretation of the environmental challenge faced by businesses.

The application of structural equation modeling to test the VBN model revealed significant direct and indirect relationships among altruistic and conservation values, environmental beliefs, personal norms and both behavior variables. Egoistic values and openness to change values were found to be insignificant in the present study (see figure 1). Further, there are two notable findings in the research. First, in line with the basis of the VBN theory, craft business owners' personal norms were the strongest predictor of pro-environmental behaviors. The relationship between personal norms and product and operations behaviors was stronger than the relationship between personal norms and business planning behaviors. The difficulty and cost associated with strategic business planning may have an effect on the relationship between personal norms and business planning behaviors. Second, the VBN theory asserts that each variable in the model should be the strongest predictor of the variable directly following it. The findings in this study, however, suggest that altruistic values are the strongest predictor of both environmental belief and personal norms. These findings support the notion that pro-environmental behavior is a result of altruistic values (Schwartz, 1973), and suggest that altruistic values are a stronger predictor of pro-environmental behaviors than environmental beliefs.

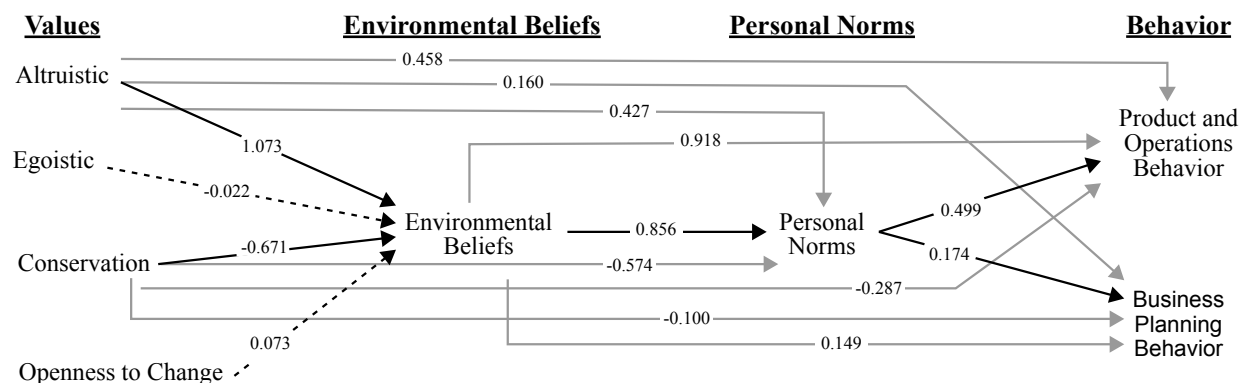


Figure 1. Model of Direct and Indirect Effects

Note. SRMR = 0.0816; CFI = 0.951; RMSEA = 0.041; PCLOSE = 0.173

Factor indicators have been removed for simplicity. Dotted line arrows indicate insignificant direct paths; gray arrows indicate significant indirect paths.

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